

To Dr. Welch from Dr. Flick.

Philadelphia,
March 23, 1904.

My dear Dr. Welch:

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Your letter of 28th inst. to hand. I am sorry I cannot have you for luncheon but perhaps we can have you at the dinner in the evening. The dinner of the Henry Phipps Institute staff has been changed to the evening of the 28th, and you will receive an invitation to it if you have not already received one.

In regard to the work before the conference at the College of Physicians, I feel that there is only one course for the conference to pursue in the interest of the crusade against tuberculosis and that is to absolutely ignore both Lewis and Bell. From what I can learn about the followers of both of these men I am convinced that they are uncontrollable hordes which if ever brought together in convention will do a great deal of harm if good men lend themselves and give the use of their names. We have in this country quite a number of able advanced workers in the crusade against tuberculosis who, if brought together, could speak judiciously and could aid the movement for the prevention of tuberculosis in every part of the country by outlining the methods to be pursued. The number is not large enough, however, to overcome the pernicious influence of a much larger number of men who have not been educated and cannot be educated to the new ideas about tuberculosis. Within a month I have appeared before a small medical society which has been asked to send delegates to the Lewis Congress and I was then forcibly impressed with the futility of trying to educate the public through a Congress made up of delegates from such organizations. The members of that society had scarcely yet begun to think about the A.B.C. of tuberculosis work. I am inclined to think that the majority of the delegates which have been promised to Lewis are people of this character, and it is easy to picture to oneself what it would mean to have a thousand such men in session. Personally I feel that I can accomplish more good in the world by plodding on alone and doing the best I can than by entering such combinations and thereby depriving myself of the very weapons which I would otherwise use for educational purposes. As I have written to Dr. Osler, I am willing to let the conference go with Lewis if the majority deems proper, but individually would want to withdraw and remain in retirement. However, I will trust that everything will go for the best.

Yours truly,

Lawrence F. Flick.